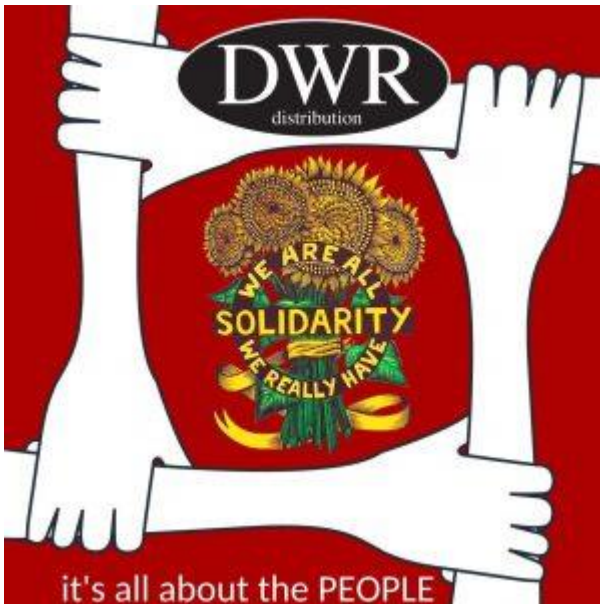


## A message of hope from DWR



When Duncan Riley established DWR Distribution from a tiny office in his home in 2006, he and his wife, Sherryn decided to do something different. Abandoning the security of a salaried job, Duncan set out to build on an idea – that the people, not the gear, makes our industry special.

***It's all about the people*** has been the guiding vision and mantra of DWR Distribution for the past 14 years. The DWR family has grown from a team of three to a team of more than 60 people, all of whom service our industry in South Africa with passion, dedication and, above all else, humanity. It is more important now than ever that we stand together and make every moment we have all about the people.

You might be feeling scared right now, just as we are. We are scared for our families and loved ones. We are scared for our own health and for the health of those around us. We are scared of what the shutdowns are going to mean for our livelihoods and for the industry that we all love so much. We feel the pain of our friends in China and across the European Union, where so many have succumbed to the deadly Covid-19 disease, and our thoughts remain with the thousands who are still fighting for their lives.

We are also heartbroken for the thousands of stagehands, riggers, operators, engineers, and designers all over the world who have no idea where their next meal is going to come from. We stand in solidarity with you all. Keep in mind that no matter how difficult it is to breathe when the walls are closing in on you, that a friend is only a phone call away. We might be in isolation right now, but we don't have to be isolated.

We have been a very blessed generation. We have grown up in a time of peace and relative global stability, which we easily take for granted. Many of our grandparents grew up during the World Wars and the Depression that came after. Many of them lost their lives and their livelihoods during those difficult times. Many of our grandparents lived at a time when belonging to a particular racial or cultural group meant that you had no rights as human beings. Many of them lost their lives and had little way to support their families. However, many of them survived or else we would not be here.

This is our war, our time of isolation and oppression. And while it is difficult to come to terms with a world that has so violently and radically changed in so short a time, it is our time to define ourselves as a generation who CAN. Fortunately, what sets this world catastrophe apart from many in the past is that we are not at war with each other. We are unified against a common enemy as one big human family, brothers and sisters, all equal

before this disease. And together, we shall prevail.

There is a global army of technicians that make some of the world's most beautiful and meaningful moments possible, the FIFA World Cup, the Olympic Games, the New Years celebrations across the globe. We make it possible to hold thousands of national and local festivals where people come together to celebrate art, music, love and laughter. We make the birthday parties special, weddings that make dreams come true, and memorable funerals that honour those that have past. We have a critical role to play in society, which is not going to suddenly go away. We bring people together – and that is something that we will all desperately need in abundance once the social distancing order is over.

Right now, we have fallen on some unprecedented challenges, but we will not be defeated. After every war there is a respite, after every victory is a celebration. Generations before us have faced greater dangers, and they have survived. We will too. The sun will come up, the people will go back into the streets, and we will mobilise our forces to throw the biggest celebration that the planet has ever seen!

In the meantime, listen to our scientists and doctors just as you would listen to your project or stage manager – trust that they know what they are doing. Follow spotter – its time to shine your beam on the doctors, nurses, lab technicians and support staff who will be stationed at the frontlines of this war. Sound guy, make sure that the people can hear our leaders as they guide us through these uncharted waters. Rigger, hold us up – we're going to need it.

While you might not know when you will receive your next pay check, we have an unprecedented opportunity to pay it forward. The show must go on, no matter what! The greater our willingness our work together and remain in our homes during quarantine, the faster we can all overcome this global disaster. Be brave – and make it ***about the people!***